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~~SECRET~~  
~~RYBAT/PBSUCCESS~~  
CLASSIFICATION

2 JUN 1954

DATE

TO PBSUCCESS, Headquarters

FROM LINCOLN

SUBJECT { GENERAL Guatemalan Matters  
SPECIFIC Sydney Gruson

DOCUMENT NO. 007  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐  
☐ DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: IS SC  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1989  
AUTH: SR 70-2  
DATE 8/10/79 REVIEWER: C

1. There is attached a memorandum on the subject prepared by Alan N. Reelfoot. This covers Gruson's activities in Mexico.
2. An analysis of the subject's articles by LINCOLN personnel indicates that their tone is definitely unfriendly to PBPRIME policies and problems in Guatemala and Central America. The result has been to place the United States and its actions in an unfavorable light. Gruson has more or less accepted the official Guatemalan line with respect to the recent arms shipments and has decried United States statements and activities as unwarranted interference.
3. Gruson has habitually disregarded the opinions of independent papers and other news outlets in Guatemala and elsewhere in Latin America; and some of his statements have been in conflict with independent opinion. For instance, the statement that the Department of State stand has unified the people of Guatemala is certainly subject to question and qualification. Gruson makes no attempts to present a balanced study of the views of different elements in the local society and business community, nor does he give any space to the ideas of prominent persons opposed to the government policies. The net result is a biased report and a slanting of the news to fit a preconceived attitude.
4. The articles of Gruson have regularly been friendly to the Guatemalan Government. They have tended to laugh off the current fuss and make light of any danger involved in the path adopted by Guatemala. The stories have provided excellent support for the ARBENZ regime, locally and abroad, and have furnished good propaganda for the international Communist press. Reports from Guatemala indicate that Gruson's activities have been harmful to the activities of PBSUCCESS.

CSVincent/jpk

Distribution: Wash (3)  
Files (2)

Att: 2-page memo

JEROME C. DUNBAR

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MEMORANDUM

2 June 1954

SUBJECT: Sidney GRUSON

1. The above-named individual, a New York Times correspondent located in Mexico City, was the subject of an investigation on the part of the office of the legal attache(FBI) was interested in both GRUSON and his wife(she being an American citizen) for their leftist leanings and was covering their activities.
2. GRUSON first came to our attention when his effects arrive in Vera Cruz, Mexico, consigned c/o American Consul and the administrative section of the Embassy began to quiz all sections to ascertain whether or not State had failed to forward the usual travel order copies. A few days later the then-acting New York Times correspondent came to advise of the contemplated arrival of his successor and the fact that his background precluded anyone having close contact with him. After mentioning his name, he was advised that someone by that name had shipped their household goods to the American Consul, which fact did not surprise him and he passed it off with "he is always pulling things like that!" He was surprised, however, that he did this to the American Consul inasmuch as he was a British subject, having been born in Dublin.
3. After making the usual protocol visits, GRUSON spent considerable time around the Embassy, giving the impression that he was expecting leads and information on behind-the-scenes diplomatic manoeuvring, inasmuch as his wife "who had covered the State Department beat in Washington always received such valuable information." He did receive an off-the-record briefing shortly prior to the initiation of negotiations for the Mutual Military pact between the United States and Mexico, which he immediately published, much to the consternation of the State Department. The story which he broke created an anti-American atmosphere which was immediately picked up and exploited by the Mexican Communist press and repeated elsewhere on the Hemisphere after Mexico refused to participate in the pact.
4. Shortly after his arrival GRUSON made contact with the leftist members of the Foreign correspondent group with whom he maintains a constant working and social relationship as well as with extreme leftist Mexican groups and several of the known Communist groups.

5. C

7 It is interesting to note that prior to the departure of the Czech Minister(son-in-law of SLANSKY) that both GRUSON and his wife were invited to a small, intimate dinner by the Minister. It was never ascertained whether or not they attended inasmuch as the FBI coverage of the guests left much to be desired.

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6. GRUSON's leftist associations, particularly during the Mexican presidential elections, caused much ill feeling among the Mexican officials who would have declared him "persona non grata" except for fear of recriminations. He defended Lombardo Toledano's political campaign, violently in some instances, during informal discussions, although he never had articles reflecting this viewpoint. He even spent three hours trying to convince the writer that Lombardo Toledano was not a Communist, and that it was purely coincidental that his policy and statements, particularly viz-a-via the United States, were synonymous with those of STALIN.

7. GRUSON's parties or gatherings were heavily attended by known Communist and anti-American individuals, which usually resulted in violent differences of opinion between the guests and a gradual reluctance by democratic thinking people to accept invitations to his home. GRUSON, himself, claimed to be a Socialist.

8. I was advised by his predecessor that he called the New York Times attention to some of GRUSON's earlier reporting, particularly that extolling the Guatemalan agrarian reform, and was informed by his superiors that his criticism was considered "anti-Semitic."

Alan N. REELFOOT

ANR/gfb  
2 June 1954